

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 03792 141312Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 141054Z MAY 76
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5720

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3792

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF SILVA MUNOZ

1. SILVA MUNOZ, THE LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UDE, CAME TO SEE ME MAY 12. SILVA, A POLITICAL FIGURE OF IMPORTANCE, IS USUALLY INTERESTING BUT SUFFERS FROM A TOUCH OF THE BYZANTINE. I FOUND HIS PRESENTATION THIS TIME RATHER CONFUSING, BUT THE MAIN POINTS ARE WORTH REPORTING.

2. AS IS HIS CUSTOM, HE BELITTLED ARIAS, WHOM HE WOULD LIKE TO REPLACE. HE INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT THE KING MIGHT RELIEVE ARIAS AFTER THE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES SINCE THE REFORM PACKAGE - WHICH WAS BASICALLY WHAT THE TRAFFIC WOULD BEAR AT THE MOMENT - NEEDED SKILLFUL LEADERSHIP OR IT MIGHT EASILY FOUNDER. THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM COULD BE BROUGHT TO HEEL, THOUGH THE KING MIGHT NOT BE SURE OF HIMSELF AND HIS REAL CLOUT AND THUS MORE HESITANT ON THAT SCORE THAN HE SHOULD BE. THE ONLY REAL PROBLEM LAY IN GETTING ARIAS TO ACTUALLY SUBMIT A RESIGNATION, SINCE FIRING HIM OUTRIGHT WOULD BE HARDER TO DO. WE HAVE HEARD OCCASIONALLY FROM LESS PRESTIGIOUS SOURCES THE IDEA THAT ARIAS WOULD BE REPLACED AFTER THE VISIT, A VIEW CLEARLY TINGED WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WISH FULFILLMENT. AND THE PRESS, WHICH CYCLICLY INVOKES THE POSSIBILITY OF ARIAS' BEING REPLACED, HAS AGAIN BEGUN TO MUTTER ON THIS SCORE, WITHOUT CONNECTING IT, HOWEVER, TO THE VISIT.

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PAGE 02 MADRID 03792 141312Z

3. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SOME DAY ARIAS MAY HAVE TO GO,

ALTHOUGH HIS DEPARTURE WOULD BE THE RESULT OF A REAL CRISIS RATHER THAN THE PRODUCT OF THE WISHES OF SELF-INTERESTED POLITICIANS OUTSIDE THE GOVT. AT ALL EVENTS, I HAVE SAID TO ONE OF THE KING'S AIDES THAT I AM TROUBLED BY THE ATTEMPT TO TIE TOGETHER THE KING'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES WITH A SCENARIO FOR REPLACING ARIAS AFTERWARDS. THIS KIND OF TALK IS NEITHER IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF SPAIN NOR OF THE UNITED STATES.

4. LASTLY, SILVA TALKED ABOUT THE WEAKNESSES IN THE POSITIONS OF BOTH FRAGA AND AREILZA, PUTATIVE RIVALS TO REPLACE AIRAS, AND MADE THE SUGGESTION THAT THE GOS, IF IT WERE CLEVER, WOULD MAKE A SPECIAL KIND OF PACT WITH THE BUNKER BY BUYING OFF CERTAIN LEADING BUNKER FIGURES REALLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROTECTION OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGES THAN ABOUT THE VESTIGIAL PURITY OF FRANCOISM. STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID03792
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760188-0236
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760554/aaaabtzg.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIEWS OF SILVA MUNOZ
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP, (MUNOZ, SILVA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006